



# NEWS RELEASE

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture,  
Trade and Consumer Protection  
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources



## **DNR & DATCP Reminder: Plan ahead for fall & winter manure spreading**

MADISON – With continued wet and wintry weather in many areas of the state, officials with the departments of Natural Resources and Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection are reminding farmers to plan ahead and use state and local resources when they spread manure this fall and winter.

The agencies sent out a similar notice in September, when it became apparent that the harvest would be delayed both because of late planting and wet fall conditions. Those wet conditions are continuing, further delaying the harvest in parts of the state. Combined with early snowfalls and freezing temperatures, that could mean a narrow window for manure spreading this fall.

State officials have also cautioned farmers that field conditions in some regions may parallel last year, which resulted in some farmers having frozen fields after corn and soybeans were off. If the snowy and cold weather continues, that could mean frozen ground conditions and a higher risk for manure runoff.

The Department of Natural Resources has contacted large farms with waste discharge permits to notify them of their options. However, livestock farms of any size need to be aware of potential problems, officials note.

The online Wisconsin Manure Management Advisory System (MMAS) offers the [Runoff Risk Advisory Forecast](#) ([manureadvisorysystem.wi.gov](http://manureadvisorysystem.wi.gov)), a tool all farmers can use to assess how high the risk of runoff is for their general location before they spread manure. The tool uses weather forecasts of rain or melting snow, along with soil moisture, slope, land cover and snow cover.

Farmers can also use nutrient management maps included in the MMAS to evaluate which of their own fields are the least or most prone to runoff. The system is a joint effort of DATCP and several federal and University of Wisconsin entities.

Farmers with nutrient management plans need to follow their plans and pay close attention to soil conditions, application rates and setbacks from streams, lakes or drinking water wells.

Farmers without nutrient management plans are also encouraged to contact crop consultants or county conservationists, who can help identify fields and practices that lower risk for runoff.

Contact information for county conservation offices is available at [datcp.wi.gov](http://datcp.wi.gov), search for “conservation directory”. Information about response planning and prevention of manure spills is at <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/agbusiness/manurespills.html>.

Regardless of whether farmers have nutrient management in place, they need to have an emergency plan in case they have a runoff incident, say DNR and DATCP officials. Farmers need to know what steps to take if runoff or a spill occurs, who to call, how to contain it and how to clean it up.

If a spill or manure runoff occurs during spreading, farmers need to report the spill immediately by calling the DNR spill emergency hotline at 1-800-943-0003.

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